

# ***FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET***

**Meeting Date:** May 14, 2015

**Agenda Item:** Sun River Fishing Access Site

**Division:** Fisheries

**Action Needed:** Endorsement

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 5 minutes

---

## **Background**

FWP is seeking Commission approval to conduct due diligence toward potentially acquiring a fishing access site on the Sun River in Cascade County. The site is located 2.2 miles southwest of Vaughn. This is a 56.8-acre parcel with 0.33 miles of Sun River frontage and three ponds measuring 3.2 acres, 0.75 acres, and 0.53 acres. The largest pond is licensed by FWP to contain largemouth bass. Previous surveys by FWP showed the pond had yellow perch, pumpkinseed sunfish, fathead minnows and white suckers. The Sun River provides angling for rainbow trout, brown trout and mountain whitefish. FWP estimated this section of the Sun River had 1,237 angler days in 2013. Besides fishing for bass, trout and whitefish, other recreation potential includes floating, waterfowl hunting, upland bird hunting, deer hunting, trapping furbearers, bird watching and nature walks. There are three FASs upstream at 14.5 miles (Fort Shaw), 6 miles (Medicine River), and 2.2 miles (Largent Bend). Downstream there are three county bridge access sites at 3 miles, 8.5 miles, 15.1 miles, and 18 miles from the site. The parcel is accessible by road through a recorded easement. The landowner has expressed interest in disposing of this parcel.

## **Public Involvement Process & Results**

FWP has conducted the following:

- Met with landowner in April 2015 to discuss his interest in disposing of the parcel.
- Informal discussions with several members of the public to gauge public interest in the site.

If endorsed to proceed, FWP would formally evaluate the location to include an environmental assessment, with public notices and opportunities for review and comment.

## **Alternatives & Analysis**

The landowner has expressed interest in disposing of the parcel and is willing to discuss options with FWP. The site is very similar to Largent Bend FAS. Given the high quality of recreation opportunity observed at Largent Bend FAS, this parcel has a high probability of providing similar quality and abundance of recreation.

## **Agency Recommendation & Rationale**

FWP recommends that the Commission endorse its request to conduct due diligence toward potentially acquiring the property. With minimal development, the site could provide public access for fishing in the river and ponds, hunting, launch and recovery for floating the river, and hiking.

## **Proposed Motion**

I move that the Commission endorse FWP's request to negotiate the acquisition of a fishing access site on the Sun River near Vaughn.